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ABSTRACT

A study identified the current structure and status of school-community partnership programs and their relationship to partnership program success. Data were drawn from a survey of all partnership directors who coordinate partnerships between multiple schools and multiple businesses (1,875) in K-12 public schools in the United States. Highlights of the results include the following: (1) the average length of programs was 7 years and the most frequent length was 5 years, although some had existed for 30 years; (2) nearly half of the partnership programs had 100 percent participation (all schools in the demographic area served by the partnership program had community partners); (3) more than half the programs were cooperatively funded through schools, community, and community agencies; (4) more than one-third of the partnership directors worked directly for the superintendent, and about one-fourth worked for the public relations or community relations office; (5) the partnerships involved a broad range of groups on their boards; (6) 61 percent of the partnership directors were full-time employees, 39 percent were part time, and 7 percent were volunteers; (7) partnership directors had a mean of 15 years in education and an average of 5 years as a director; (8) 68 percent of the directors had a Master's degree or above; (9) the average salary range was $50,000-$60,000 for male directors and $40,000-$50,000 for female directors; and (10) over half of the partnership directors did not know of state department of education involvement in partnership programs. (KC)

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NAPE

Research Brief

Status of Partnerships and Partnership Directors in the United States

This report is provided to participants of the 1995 NAPE National Symposium on Partnerships in Education through the generosity of State Farm Insurance Companies Regional Office (Lincoln, Nebraska) and the National Association of Partners in Education, Inc. (NAPE). The information in the report was researched and compiled by Dr. Barbara Hopkins, Ventures in Partnerships Director, Lincoln, Nebraska.

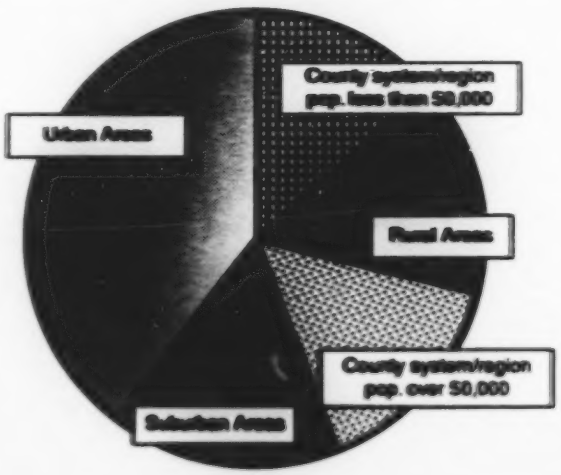
INTRODUCTION

Data reported in this research brief is drawn from a doctoral study completed in 1994 to identify the current structure and status of school-community partnership programs and their relationship to partnership program success. All identifiable partnership directors who coordinate partnerships between multiple schools and multiple businesses (1,875) in K-12 public schools were surveyed to inform us of the status of partnerships in the United States. A summary of the portion of the study that dealt with program structure and partnership directors is presented in this research brief.

LEVEL OF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS BY DEMOGRAPHIC AREA

Data on partnership programs surveyed in this study revealed a time range for program operation from several months to thirty years. The average period of program operation was seven years and the most frequent response was five years. Each partnership director identified the size and nature of their demographic area of responsibility.

DEMOGRAPHIC AREA	PERCENTAGE
Urban areas	40%
Suburban areas	16%
County system/region-population over 50,000	15%
Rural area	15%
County system/region with population under 50,000	14%



Nearly half of the partnership programs (46 percent) had 100 percent participation, meaning that all schools in the demographic area served by the partnership program had community partners. Twenty-six percent of the programs had 75-99 percent participation. About 10 percent of the programs had 50-74 percent of the schools participating, and another 10 percent had 25-49 percent of the schools participating. Eight percent of the partnership programs had less than one-fourth participation of the schools in the demographic area which they served.

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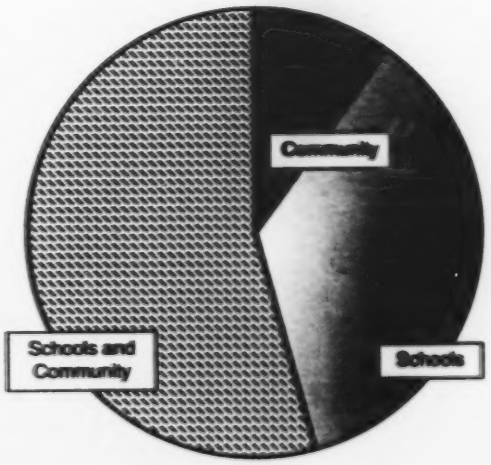
FUNDING FOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

The funding sources for partnership program staff and for the partnership programs were identified and analyzed for their influence on partnership program success. The partnership director's perception of the security of that funding was also identified. Organizational models for partnership funding were identified as school-based, community-based and collaborations between schools and community agencies. The dominant model of organization was identified as being collaboratively funded (54 percent). Thirty-six percent of the partnership programs were school-based (i.e. totally funded by schools for both the program and staff). Ten percent of the programs were totally community based (no school funds utilized).

FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENTAGE
Schools & Community	54%
100% Schools	36%
100% Community	10%



DIRECTOR'S PERCEPTION OF FUTURE YEARS OF FUNDING SECURITY	PERCENTAGE
1 to 3	58%
4 to 6	11%
7 or more	31%

ORGANIZATION OF PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership directors were asked to identify the department that they were most closely affiliated with in the school system. More than one-third of the directors worked most closely with the Superintendent's office. Nearly one-fourth were most closely connected to the public relations or community relations office.

CLOSEST SCHOOL DEPARTMENT AFFILIATION	PERCENTAGE
Superintendent's office	38%
Public/Community relations	24%
Curriculum/Instruction	12%
Vocational Education	11%
Guidance Counseling/Alternative	6%
Human Resources/Personnel	3%
Office of Grants	3%
State/Federal Programs	3%

Each partnership director identified their position in the structure of their organization, whether it was a school, community organization, business organization, or independent agency. Sixty-two percent of the directors reported to a top manager. The others (38 percent) reported to middle managers.

BUILDING COALITIONS THROUGH BOARD REPRESENTATION

The research literature on partnerships provides evidence that successful partnerships build broad coalitions of community support through representation of diverse groups of stakeholders on a partnership governing board or advisory council. The following groups were identified as being on the decision making boards of partnership programs surveyed in this study.

GROUPS	PERCENTAGE
School Administrators	88%
Business Representatives	84%
Teachers	71%
Superintendents	68%
Chamber of Commerce	53%
Community Groups	50%
Parents	50%
Asst. Superintendents	42%
Students	35%
Parent Organizations	32%
Government Employees	26%
Teacher Unions	23%
Professional Trade Organizations	23%
Cultural Agencies	16%
Junior League	9%

STAFFING OF PARTNERSHIPS

Of the partnership directors who had paid positions 61 percent were full time employees, with 39 percent being part time. Seven percent of the partnership directors served as volunteers. Full time secretaries were available for 54 percent of the partnership directors. Part time secretaries staffed the remaining 46 percent of the programs. Three percent of the secretaries served as volunteers.

STAFF TIME	PERCENTAGE
Paid Full Time Director	61%
Paid Part Time Director	39%
Volunteer Director	7%
Paid Full Time Secretary	54%
Paid Part Time Secretary	46%
Volunteer Secretary	3%

Partnership directors also indicated what percentage of their work time was devoted to partnerships. Twenty-six percent of the directors spent all of their time on partnerships. Twenty-one percent of them spent one-half of their time or more on partnerships. Twenty-two percent spent between one-fourth and one-half of their time on partnerships, and 31 percent of the directors devoted less than one-fourth of their time to partnerships

TIME SPENT ON PARTNERSHIPS	PERCENTAGE OF DIRECTORS
100%	26%
50-99%	21%
25-49%	22%
Less than 25%	31%

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORS

Partnership directors were asked about their work backgrounds and experiences. The mean scores for years of experience are reported below.

BACKGROUND EXPERIENCE	AVERAGE YEARS
Education	15
For-profit business	4
Human Services	4
Volunteering	10

Partnership directors had an average of 5 years of experience as a director; yet, the average number of years that programs had been in operation was 7 years. This indicates that most partnership directors were directing programs which they did not start. Seventy-four percent of the directors identified themselves as being female; 26 percent male. The educational background of partnership directors indicated a highly educated population. The following table identifies the level of education for partnership directors.

HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED	PERCENTAGE
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	12%
Masters Degree plus additional graduate hours	39%
Masters Degree	17%
Bachelors Degree	28%
Associate Degree	1%
High School	3%

The average salary range for partnership directors was between $40,000-$50,000. For men the mean range was between $50,000-$60,000; for women it was between $40,000-$50,000. The difference in salary between men and women was statistically significant.

STATE SUPPORT

Forty-five percent of the directors reported awareness of a state department of education staff member to support partnership efforts. No state department designee was identified by 30 percent and 25 percent of the directors did not know if a state department liaison existed. State mandates requiring partnerships or community education programs were known to exist by 18 percent of the participants. No state mandate (63 percent) was the highest response. Twenty percent of the directors did not know if there was state legislative or administrative policy in support of educational partnerships.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

The results reported in this research brief are part of a comprehensive research study that included the identification of indicators of partnership program success; the analysis of the relationship of organizational structure to partnership program success; and the analysis of the relationship of organizational structures of programs and director's position to program success.

For additional information, please contact:

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